

# Death and Timelines

By Blaze Marshall

My name is Patrick Careon, although I've only gone by the alias "Sponge" since that fateful day... or was it night? Eh, it doesn't matter. What matters is that I was 13 at best when I "stopped being the alpha." But I guess I should back up and tell you how it all happened.

It was back in September 2012 when I found myself drawn to quite an interesting site. I was a fan of Andrew Hussie's web comic *Homestuck* back then, and the site offered a download link for the game *SBARG*, which promised to be just like the game "SBURB" from that web comic. How foolish I was back then, thinking that playing the game that ends the world would be better than just accepting my fate. I'll summarize my playthrough here, as a majority of what happened isn't important to me anymore. As to what's worth retelling? I was part of "Team Awe5ome," led by a man named Logan Aura. My only other teammate worth remembering was a gal named Niki Card. We all had our roles, of course. Logan was the cool sounding "Thief of Life," Niki was a "Mage of Light." As for me, well, I got stuck being a "Heir of Hope." I know, it sounds totally lame. I remember the first time I died... I think it was in October? You lose track of time when there's no day or night and you're barely able to keep surviving. Regardless, Logan told me to meet him at my Quest Bed. It's basically a slab that if you, well, die on, you revive with powers relating to your role and some conditional immortality. He had already "got tiger" as we called it, and surprised me when I got there. Logan's hands glowed with some sick looking green color as he pushed me onto the cold stone slab. I barely managed to utter "w-what" before he had stolen my Life away...

I was only dead for about a minute before the game brought me back. I was surrounded in a yellowish glow, and wearing some silly looking outfit. My hood was way too long, like I had a

tail on the back of my head. It wasn't long before I changed back into the rip-off Iron Man suit I had been wearing previously, but it had changed. It was made from some bright yellow metal now, and was quite shiny. After that... experience, I went to face my denizen, the massive creature that ruled the planet I now lived on. Although I had been told to kill them, I couldn't help but listen to The Choice when they offered it. It was a simple one, all things considered. "Would you rather have the skills and courage to protect your friends, or to guarantee your selfish safety?" I chose the former, and that made all the difference in the end. I went on to fight as a commander in the Prospitan army, embracing the new power and personality that my denizen had bestowed upon me. Eventually, it was time to act. The other players had decided to entirely reset the session and wipe us all from existence. I couldn't stand by and let my friends be erased. I kicked a meteor out in The Furthest Ring, an awful black void that existed outside of the session's influence. I flew off after it, commanding the other members of Team Awe5ome to come with me. Only Niki did, the two of us barely making it out before the session was engulfed in a massive red ball that ripped the only home we had known out of existence.

It took nearly 11 months for Niki and me to finally catch up to that meteor. We used our combined powers to create The Beacon, a bright yellow and orange beam that could be seen from an impossibly long distance in the oppressive black void. It was a signal to the other lost people in The Furthest Ring, that there was somewhere they could go. Many players came and went, but the most important one to show up at our little hideout was a human girl named Micha. Or at least, we thought she was human. This was revealed not to be the case when a man we only knew as "Omega" showed up. He revealed she was a decoy, a clone made with false memories to be part of his plan....and then he killed her. I felt my other personality take over, and I went down to the core of the Meteor. Omega had said he was going to use it as part of his plan, and I

refused to let that happen... However, I was completely unable to stop him. He simply waved his hand and teleported me away. All Niki and I could do was watch as Omega used the Meteor's core to construct an insanely massive tower out of red quartz. The hideout was ripped to shreds, and I was just... floating in the void. He was standing on a platform at the top of it, and I don't remember what exactly motivated me. All I knew is that I wasn't going to stand by as he carried out his plan. The hideout had been my home for a year or two, and I was determined to protect my friends. I flew down to the platform, propelling myself on twin beams of Hope energy. I extended the claws on my gloves, fully intending to stab Omega right in his stupid face... Omega, of course, just smacked me into the ground. He drove a sword through my left hand, pinning me to the platform. I was made of adrenalin as I tried to fight back against him regardless. He drove one into my other hand, forcing me to try and use my legs to attack him. He'd finally had enough, and drove three swords into my back to kill me. I was immortal, mostly. But by fighting to try and save my friends, I had made my death "Heroic" and I couldn't revive from that. I woke up in a city called Necropolis. My body was transparent and my eyes were pure white. I was a ghost.

But \*Azure, an AI I had befriended with powers over Time, didn't want to just let me die. He sent a swarm of nanobots to knock me off course when I was diving towards my death. But I was still dead. That imposter \*Azure created by changing time took my place. He was the new Patrick Careon. He gets to go by "RN" and know what he does still matters. Meanwhile, I'm stuck just being the first one. The failure. The "damage sponge." I'm considered to be a "version" of him. A doomed timeclone of his template. But really, he's the clone of me. I was the real Patrick Careon, until it was taken from me. Now I'm just "Sponge," the ghost nobody gives the time of day.